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There is a conventional wisdom out there that Orange County is all built out. That pretty much all that is going to be built or preserved has been built or preserved and that the county's future has already been shaped and determined.

Like much of conventional wisdom, it is wrong. Clearly the social, cultural, educational and political makeup of this county still have a great dynamism to them. But neither is the physical structure of the OC yet "set in stone."

This column will take a brief and admittedly cursory look at many of the major land and transportation projects that are currently under discussion or development by local, state and federal officials. As you will see, there is still much before us:

The former El Toro Marine Base: This enormous piece of land (3,700 acres) will be turned into the Orange County Great Park, a large natural/wilderness space and some new development to be done by the Lennar Co. But the exact makeup and usage of each of those 3 sections is still being determined. I hope that Lennar creates some innovative and maybe even ground-breaking new communities in the developed area. Even though it is located within the city of Irvine, the Great Park is a countywide asset and I hope that it will reflect that and contain some diversified uses. And I hope that the open space is available for the enjoyment of all of us and not restricted to the use of only self-appointed "stewards".

Platinum Triangles and other shapes and colors: Not all that is new is happening on virgin ground. Downtown Anaheim will witness a major renewal with the Platinum Triangle development under the leadership of Mayor Curt Pringle. This area will see multiple high-rise residential buildings as well as new commercial and retail concepts in a nearly textbook example of urban revitalization. The John Wayne Airport area will see changes too. Once a place where everyone worked and no one lived, many high- and mid-rise residential projects are already underway and many more are planned among the office complexes around the airport. Orange County, once sole province of the 2,000-square-foot tract house, will soon offer

many more options for homeownership.

Historic preservation: Orange County has not been around that long, so there has not been too much of our short history to preserve. But that is changing. For example, the reuse of the former Tustin Marine Base is pretty much determined. But what is not determined is the fate of the two historic blimp hangers that still exist there. I think that we should find a way to save one of these unique structures. I also think that the idea of using at least part of it as a museum of the county's and the country's military past is a good one.

Bolsa Chica Wetlands: The fight over this area is over. Most of it will be preserved as natural wetlands. But what most people do not know is that some of these wetlands will have to be created and then maintained and then made available for public enjoyment. All of this will take planning and a steady supply of money. I hope we are up to the challenge to creatively supply both without new pressures on the taxpayer's wallet.

Tunnels and other connections to Riverside County: Whether you are a business person looking for closer affordable housing for your employees, or just someone sick of getting stuck on the 91 freeway, there is universal agreement that we need to expand transportation flow between Orange and Riverside counties. There is discussion of expanding the 91, straightening and expanding Ortega Highway in the south and of drilling a tunnel somewhere in between the two. We need to do something. I hope we do not rule out any of the options until we have a lot more information than we do now. Conversely, I think we should not commit to any option until we know if it is economically, politically and environmentally viable.

Roads and highways: There is a planned extension of the 241 toll road in South County to connect to I-5. Some people don't want this road. I think we need it. And later this year, we will all vote on whether to extend Measure M, the half-cent sales tax used to fund transportation. This will be a major discussion not just over the tax itself, but over what the tax money would be spent on in the next 20 years.

There's a lot going on that I did not have the space to cover here. If there's one thing I know at

this point, it is that the shape of Orange County will not be determined by its past. This area is too dynamic. We are all a part of a great future here that is yet to come.